

Department of Education

Commissioner's Office
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501
(802) 828-3135
education.vermont.gov

Department for Children and Families

Commissioner's Office
5 North, 103 South Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05671-5920
(802) 241-1942
dcf.vermont.gov

September 15, 2010

Dear Education Professional,

On February 27, 2009, the Vermont Senate and House passed S.13 - AN ACT RELATING TO IMPROVING VERMONT'S SEXUAL ABUSE RESPONSE SYSTEM. Signed into law on March 17, 2009, its legislative intent is to increase child sexual abuse prevention efforts, enhance the investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse, and improve the supervision of sex offenders.

The act (known as [Act One](#)) includes several new mandates for Vermont schools. This letter specifically addresses sections 3 and 9, which require schools to educate both children and employees about child sexual abuse. These sections also require the Department of Education (DOE) and the Department for Children and Families (DCF) to help schools meet statutory requirements. The following charts outline what is required of schools, what is required of DOE and DCF and what materials are being sent to your school principal.

Section 3: Educating children about sexual abuse and sexual violence.

REQUIRED OF SCHOOLS	REQUIRED OF DOE AND DCF
<p>Requires Vermont schools to include instruction about how to recognize and prevent sexual abuse and sexual violence in comprehensive health education.</p> <p>Effective: July 1, 2011.</p>	<p>Requires DOE and DCF to convene a working group to prepare technical assistance materials to help school districts and supervisory unions create and implement developmentally appropriate instructional programs.</p> <p>The working group has developed a Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG) to help schools meet this mandate. It provides best practice recommendations for a school-wide, community approach to prevention. The TARG is available on the DOE Web site and upon request.</p> <p>http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_health_ed/publications_resources/educ_health_ed_TARG.pdf.</p> <p>Contact: Donna McAllister, DOE, at (802) 828-1636 or donna.mcallister@state.vt.us.</p>

Section 9: Educating staff and volunteers about child sexual abuse.

REQUIRED OF SCHOOLS	REQUIRED OF DOE AND DCF
<p>Requires school boards to ensure that adults employed in schools in their districts receive orientation on the prevention, identification, and reporting of child sexual abuse and sexual violence.</p> <p>It also requires school boards to provide opportunities for parents, guardians and other interested persons to receive the same information.</p> <p>Effective: July 1, 2011.</p>	<p>Requires DOE and DCF (Agency of Human Services) to provide materials and technical support to school boards.</p> <p>DCF commissioned a special Vermont edition of the Canadian Center for Child Protection's <i>Commit to Kids</i> program —a program that helps child-serving organizations to create safe environments for children. The program includes a workbook, training video and reproducible forms. Chapter 2 of the workbook, along with the training video, provides a detailed orientation to child sexual abuse, while chapters 3 through 8 will help schools move beyond awareness to organizational change that helps keep children safe. Chapter 7 includes information about reporting child abuse in Vermont and should be included in employee orientation. Additionally, in-person mandatory reporter training is available through local DCF, Family Services District Offices. For a list of offices: dcf.vermont.gov/fsd/contact_us.</p> <p>The <i>Commit to Kids</i> program will be distributed to all schools (on DVD) in November. Please note that a special license agreement applies and is outlined in the DVD. Technical assistance to implement the program will be available upon request. DCF has also produced outreach materials that schools can use to educate parents and other adults (e.g., a rack card and poster). Materials can be ordered from the contact below. Schools can also refer parents to a new prevention Web site: protectkids.vt.gov and download a parent's guide there as well.</p> <p>Contact: Priscilla White, DCF, at (802) 241-1942 or priscilla.white@ahs.state.vt.us.</p>

We want to ensure that the appropriate personnel in your school are aware of these materials and that your school is “stepping up” to prevent child sexual abuse. An Act One Packet is being sent to all Vermont principals in November. Please ask to review it. If you would like more information about *Act One*, you can view it online at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2010/Acts/ACT001.pdf>.

Thank you for the work you do with Vermont's children.

Sincerely,



Stephen R. Dale, Commissioner
Department for Children



Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner
Department of Education